

Results from the 2006-2007 Newton Youth Risk Behavior Survey Grades 7-12

Submitted To:

The Newton Public Schools and the
Newton Department of Health and Human Services
Newton, MA

Submitted By:

Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.
Burlington, MA

METHODS

WHO CONDUCTED THE SURVEY?

- The Newton Public Schools and the Newton Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.

HOW AND WHEN WAS THE SURVEY CONDUCTED?

- The survey was administered in November of 2006 to all students in the Newton public middle and high schools. A sample of 3,005 surveys from students in grades 6 through 12 were selected for analyses.

WHO RESPONDED?

- The total number of selected respondents was 3,005.
- The number of respondents in each grade is as follows: 6th grade = 398, 7th grade = 390, 8th grade = 401, 9th grade = 447, 10th grade = 460, 11th grade = 462, and 12th grade = 430 (17 unknown).

WHAT DID THE SURVEY ASK ABOUT?

- Background characteristics such as gender, age, and grade level.
- Student use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Other issues related to student health such as violence and safety, vehicle-related risk behavior, stress, dietary behavior, suicide, and sexual behavior.

CAVEATS

CAN WE TRUST THE DATA? (Validity)

- Research indicates that student responses to such surveys are reasonably accurate provided that the survey is voluntary and confidential. The Newton survey met these conditions.
- Questionnaires were reviewed to identify frivolous responses; such cases were removed.
- The survey is based largely upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a standard and reliable instrument.

DO THE DATA REPRESENT ALL YOUTH? (Non-Respondents)

- Results can be generalized only to students who were present when the survey was administered and may not reflect responses from youth who were truant, dropped out of school, or chronically absent.

HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED? (Trends)

- Because this is the fifth administration of the Newton YRBS, trend comparisons can be made to results from the 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 surveys. Note, however, that due to the number of differences between the 6th grade version of the survey and that used with 7th and 8th graders, middle school trend comparisons are limited to grades 7 and 8.

HOW DO WE COMPARE? (Comparative Data)

- Limited high school comparisons (grades 9-12) can be made to Massachusetts as a whole using the most recent available state YRBS data (Spring 2005). Massachusetts does not administer a middle school survey.

WHO HAS THE PROBLEM?

- Although the survey was administered to students in school, the behaviors addressed are not confined solely to youth.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- These are community issues that require the attention of all community members and organizations, not merely the schools.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

What substances are used most often by Newton youth?

How does use change as youth age?

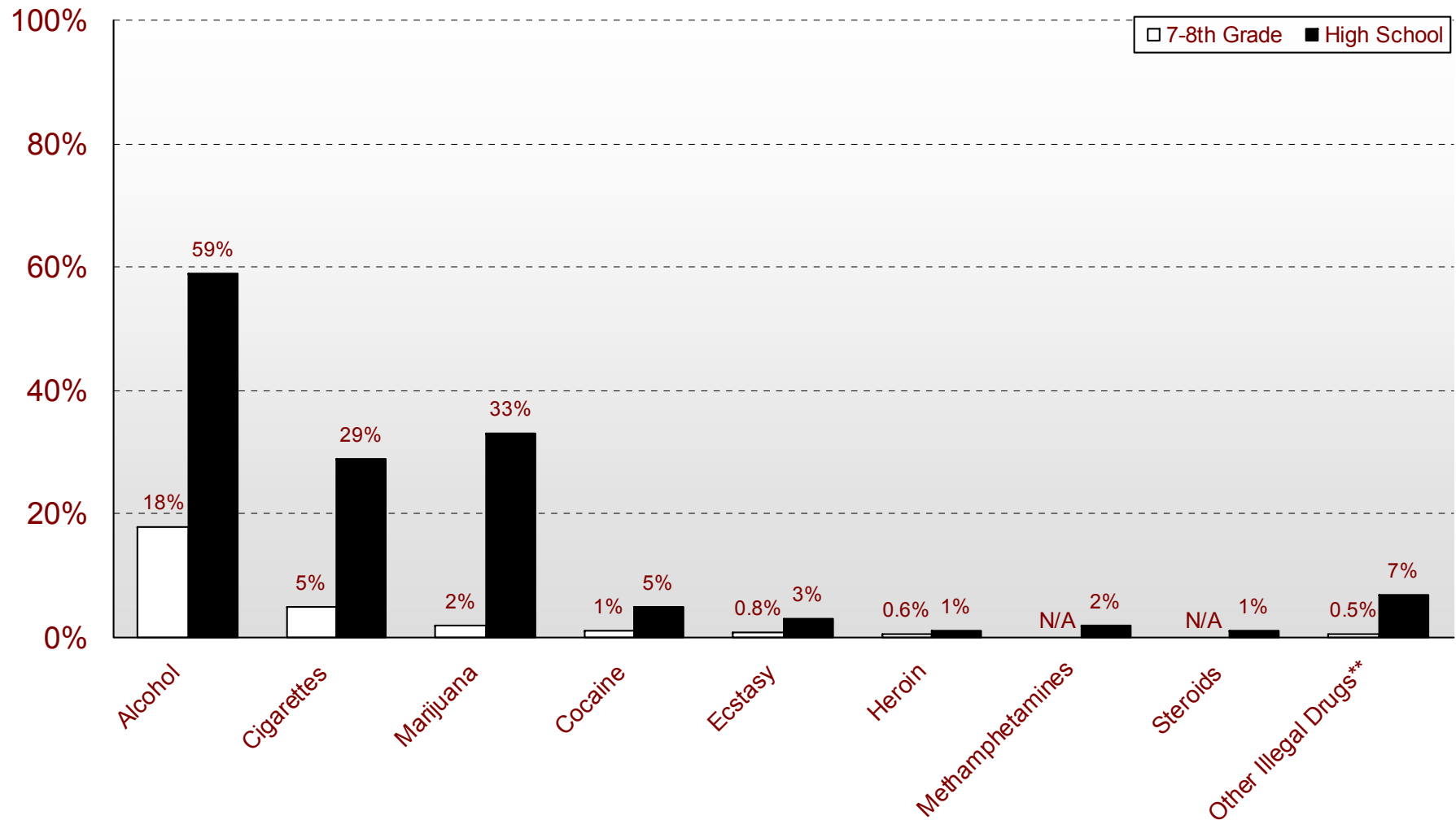
Are boys or girls more likely to use substances?

How has use changed in Newton over time?

Are rates of substance use higher or lower in Newton than in other places?

What are some of the consequences of use?

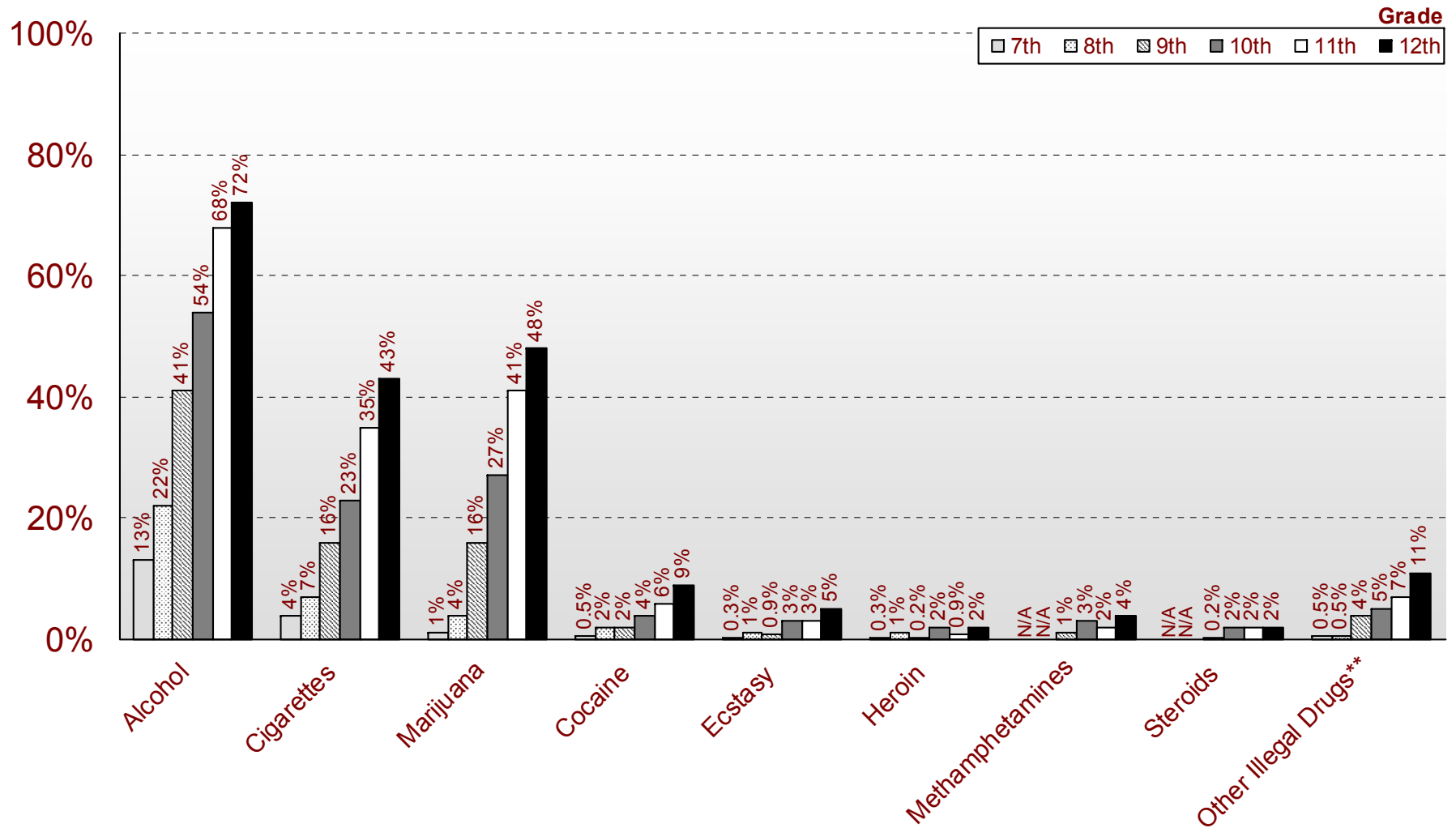
Lifetime* Substance Use for Newton 7-8th Grade and High School Students (2006)



* Lifetime Use is any use during one's lifetime.

** Respondents were asked about their use of "any other type of illegal drug, such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), GHB, or Oxycontin without a doctor's prescription."

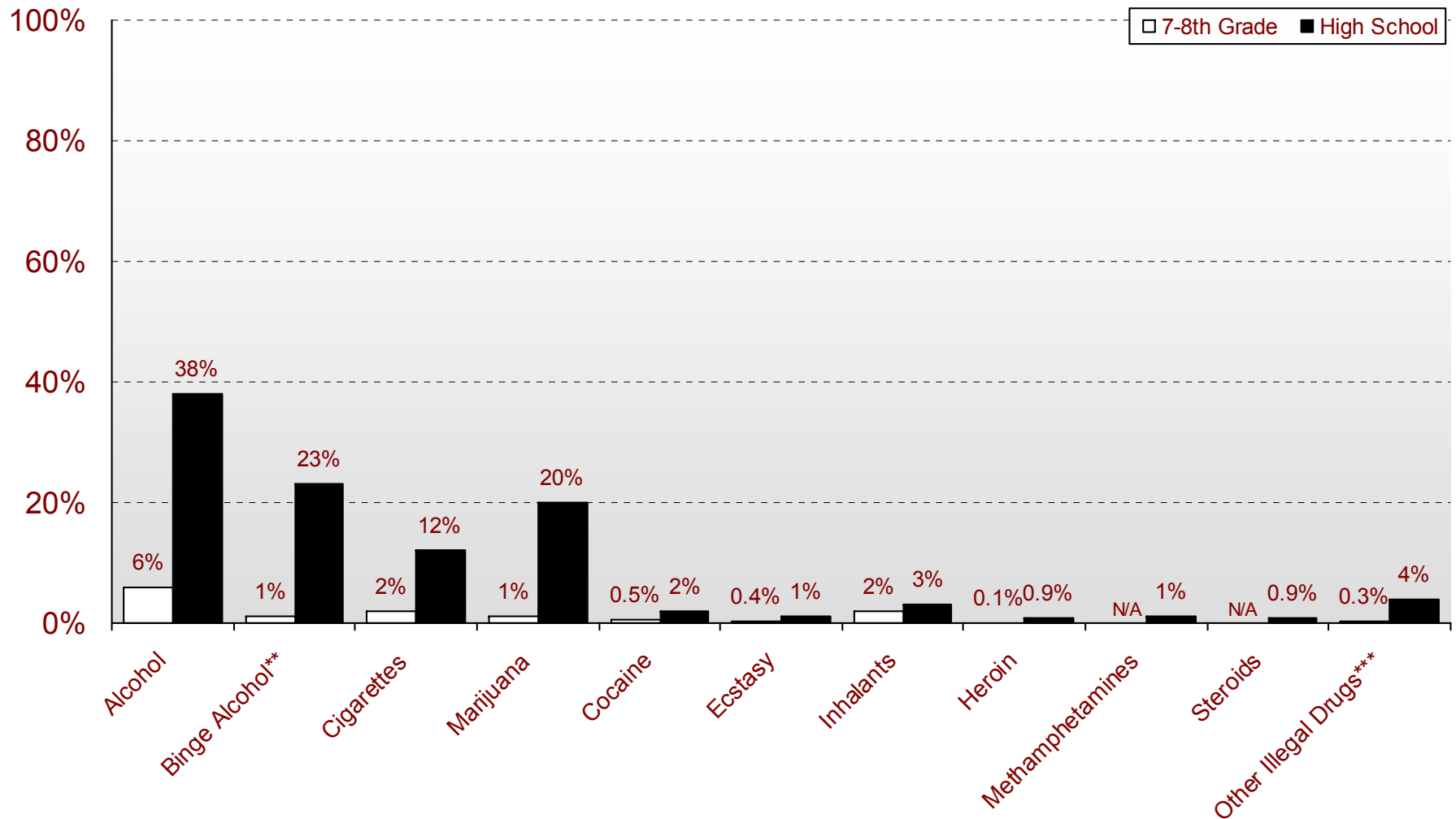
Lifetime* Substance Use for Newton 7-8th Grade and High School Students, by Grade (2006)



* Lifetime Use is any use during one's lifetime.

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Current* Substance Use for Newton 7-8th Grade and High School Students (2006)

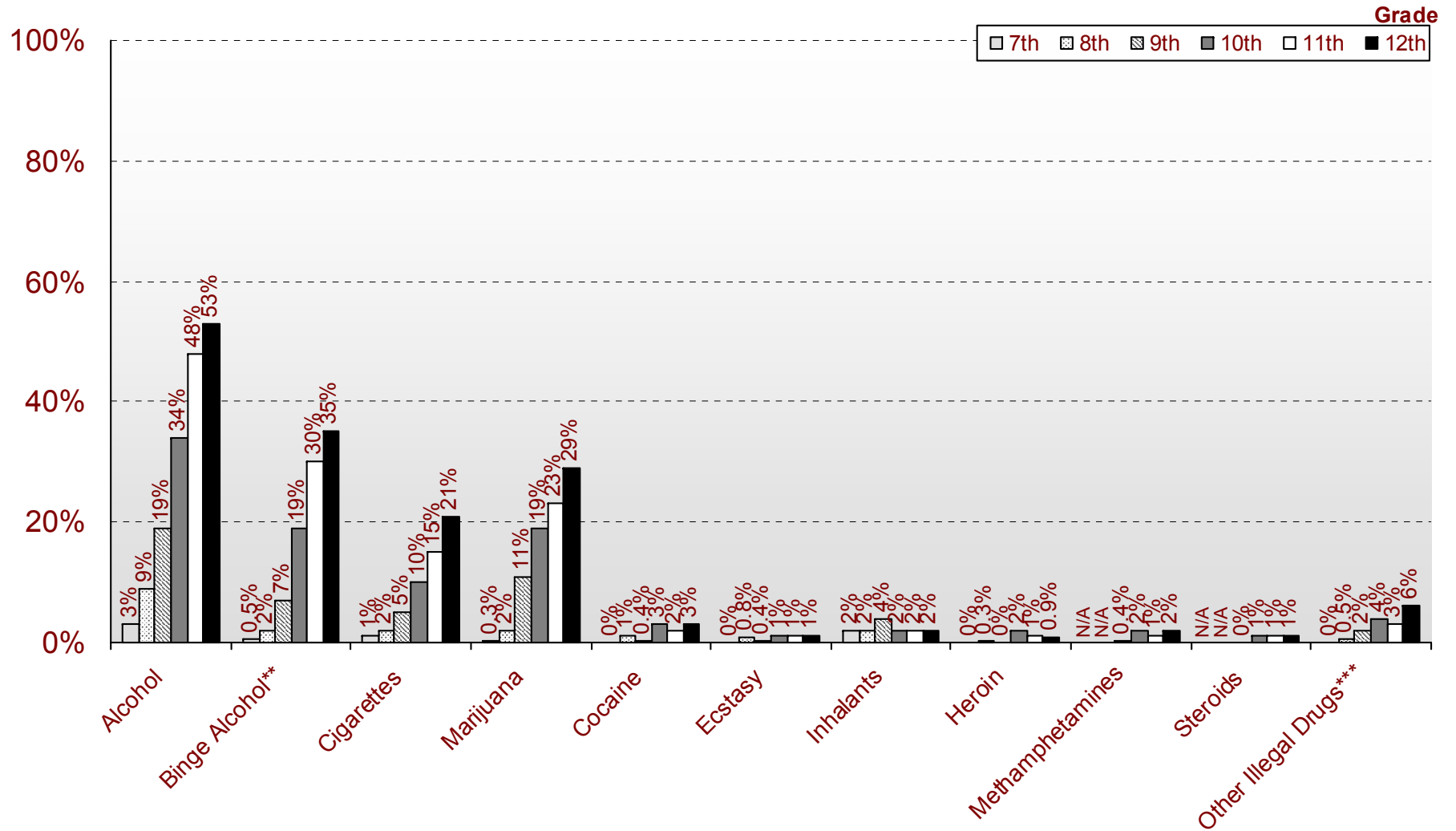


* Current Use is any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.

** Binge alcohol use is defined in the survey as having "five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours."

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Current* Substance Use for Newton 7-8th Grade and High School Students, by Grade (2006)

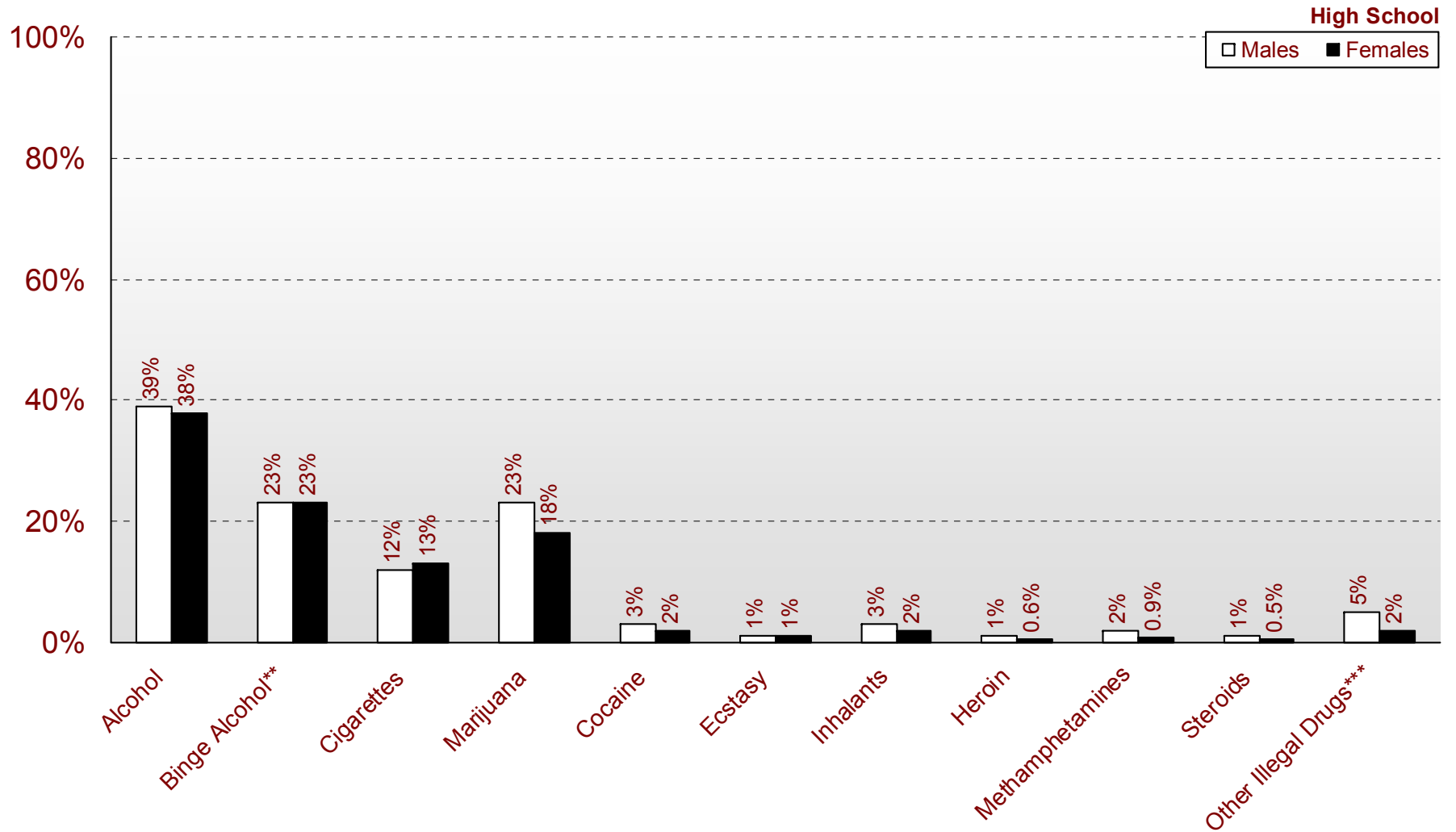


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Current* Substance Use for Newton High School Students, by Gender (2006)

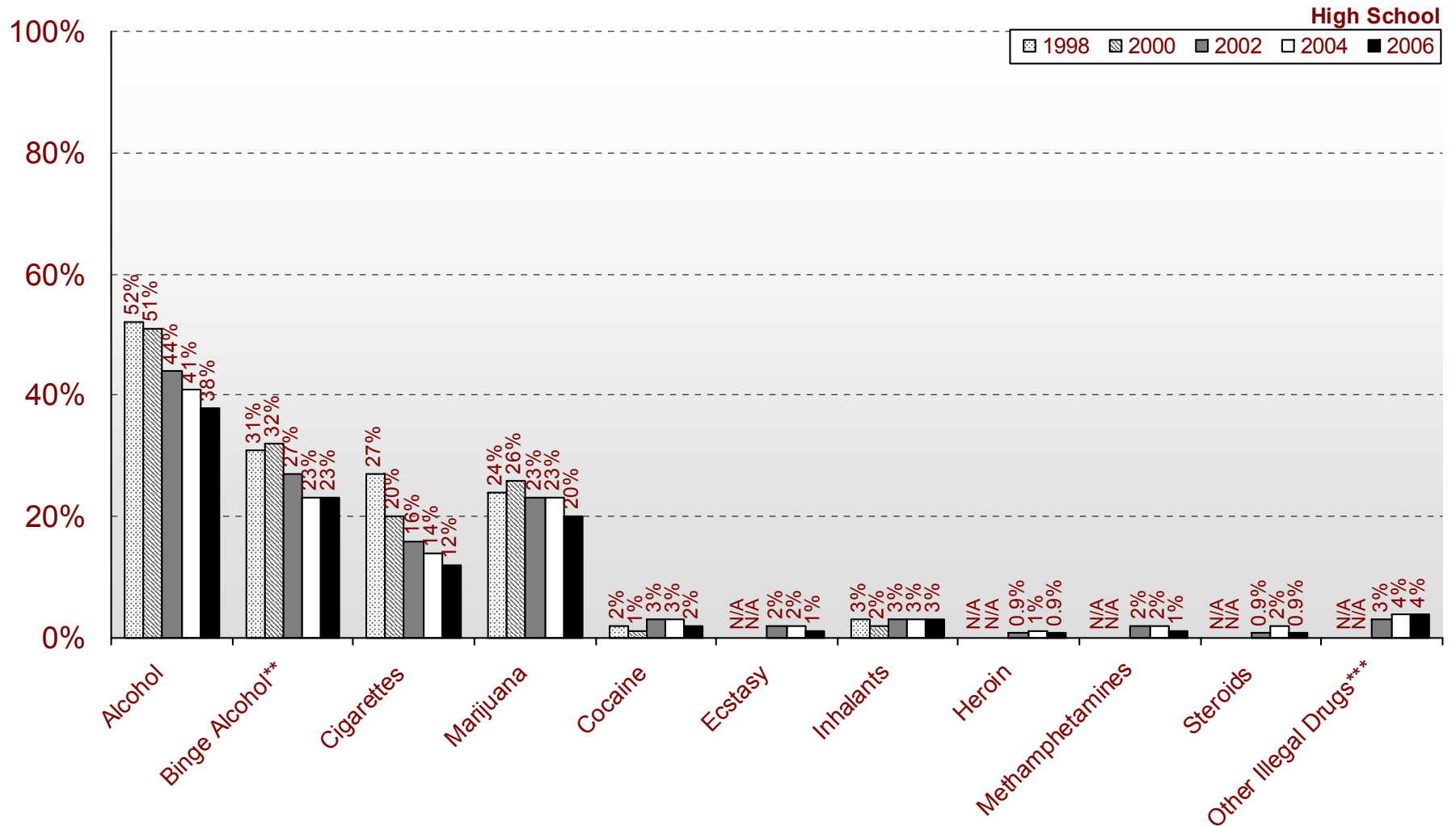


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Trends in Current* Substance Use for Newton High School Students ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)

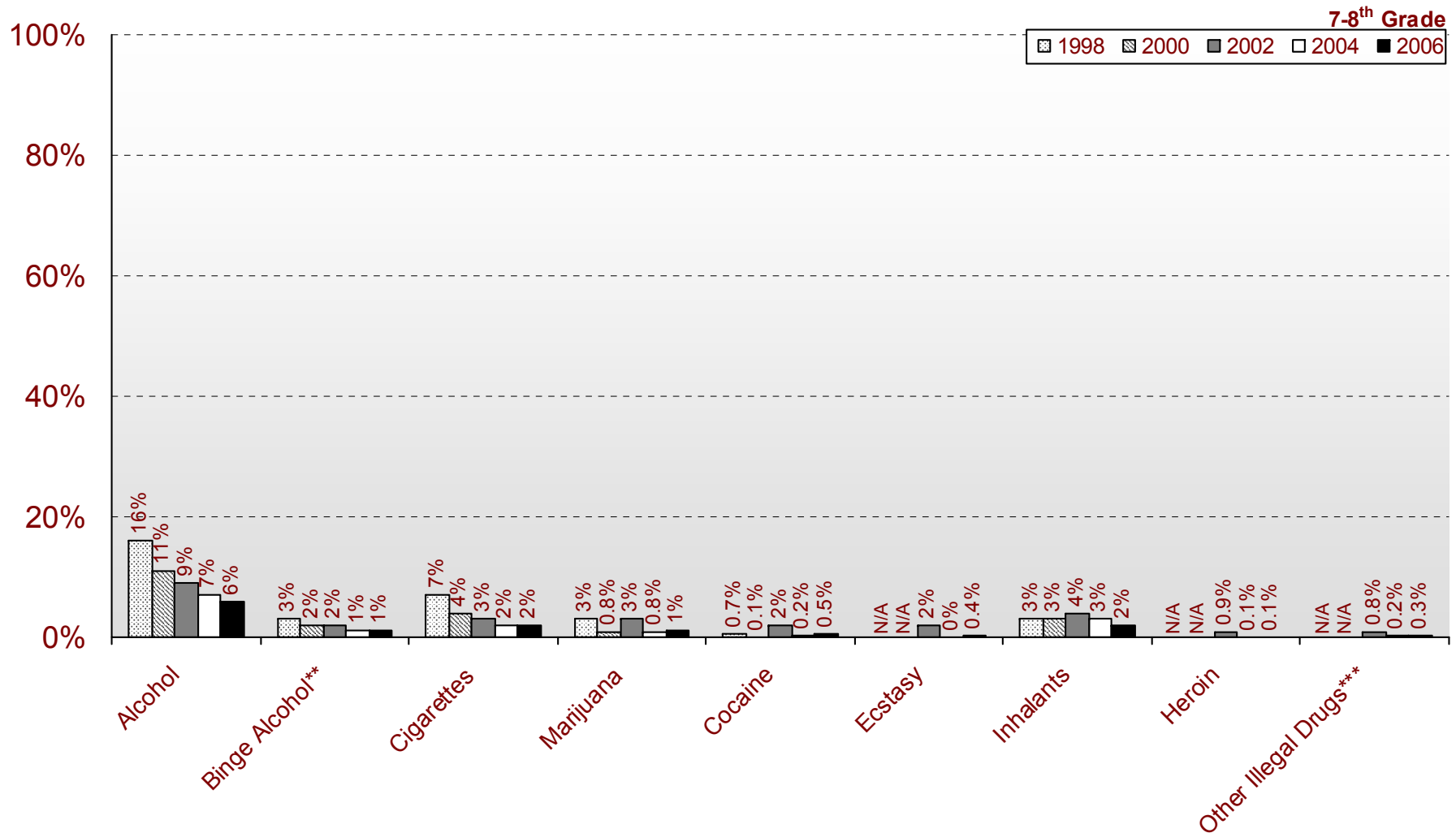


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Trends in Current* Substance Use for Newton 7-8th Grade Students ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)

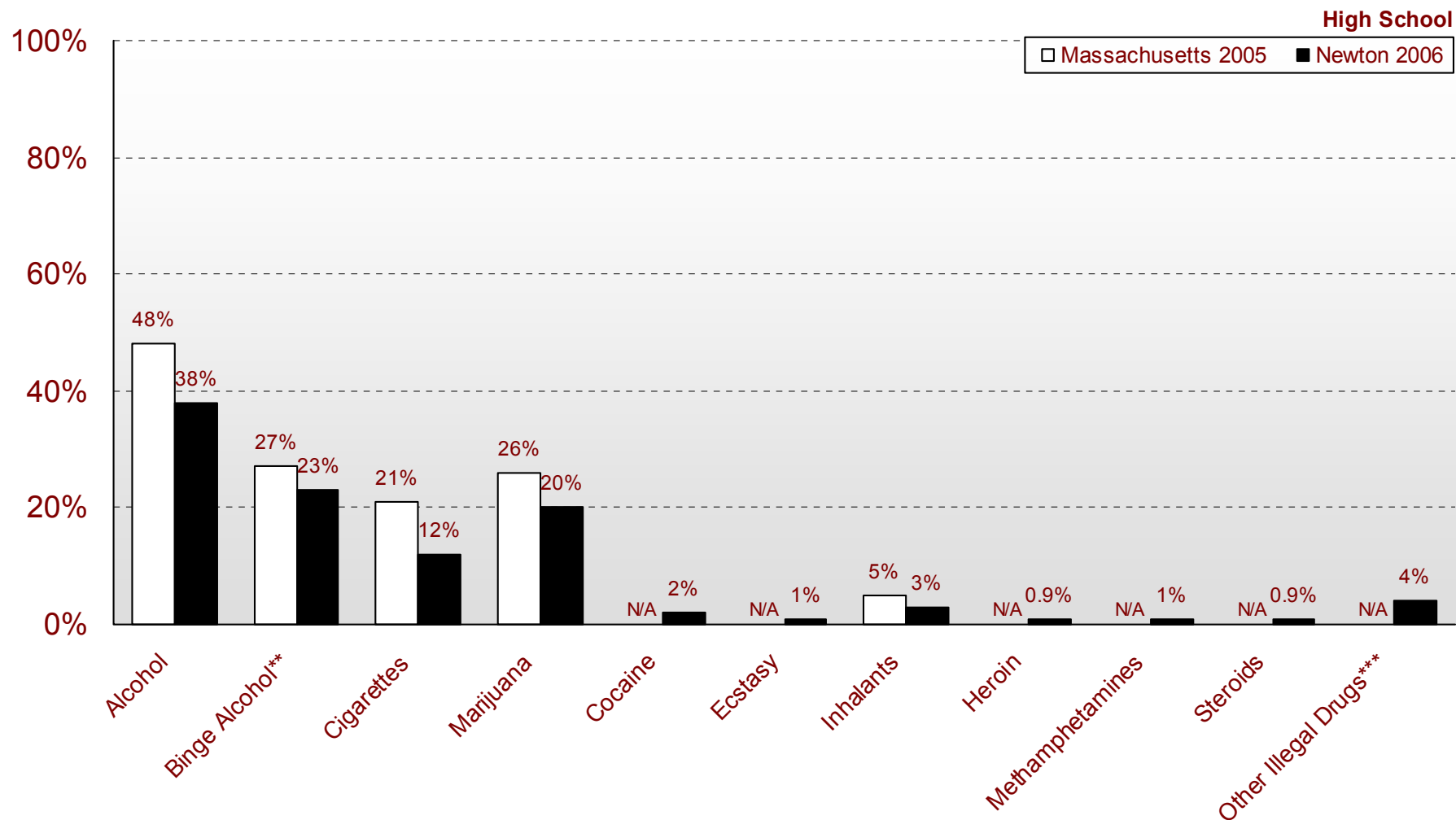


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Current* Substance Use for Newton High School Students (2006) and Massachusetts High School Students (2005)**



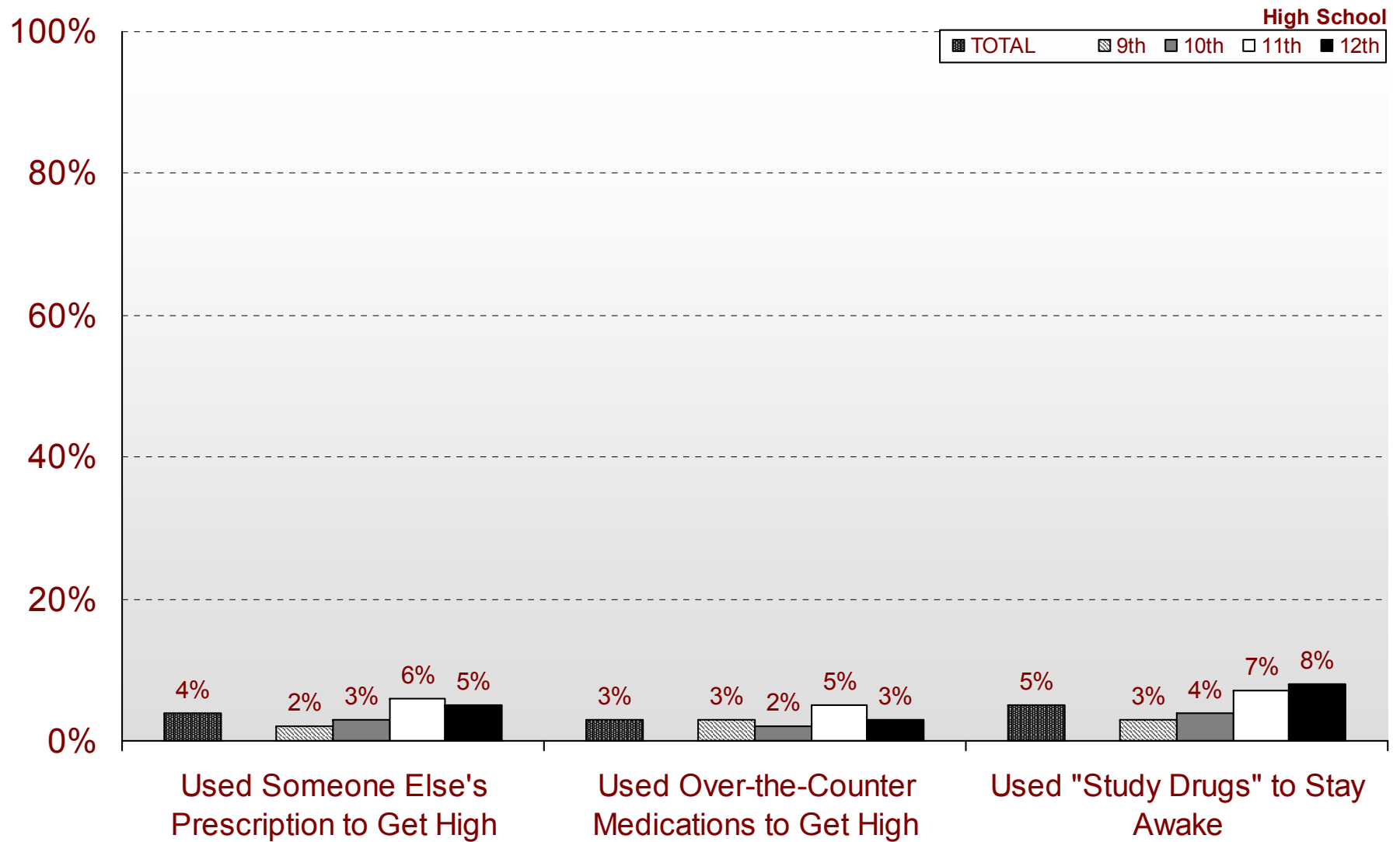
* Current Use is any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.

** Massachusetts high school data are from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the MA Department of Education in Spring, 2005.

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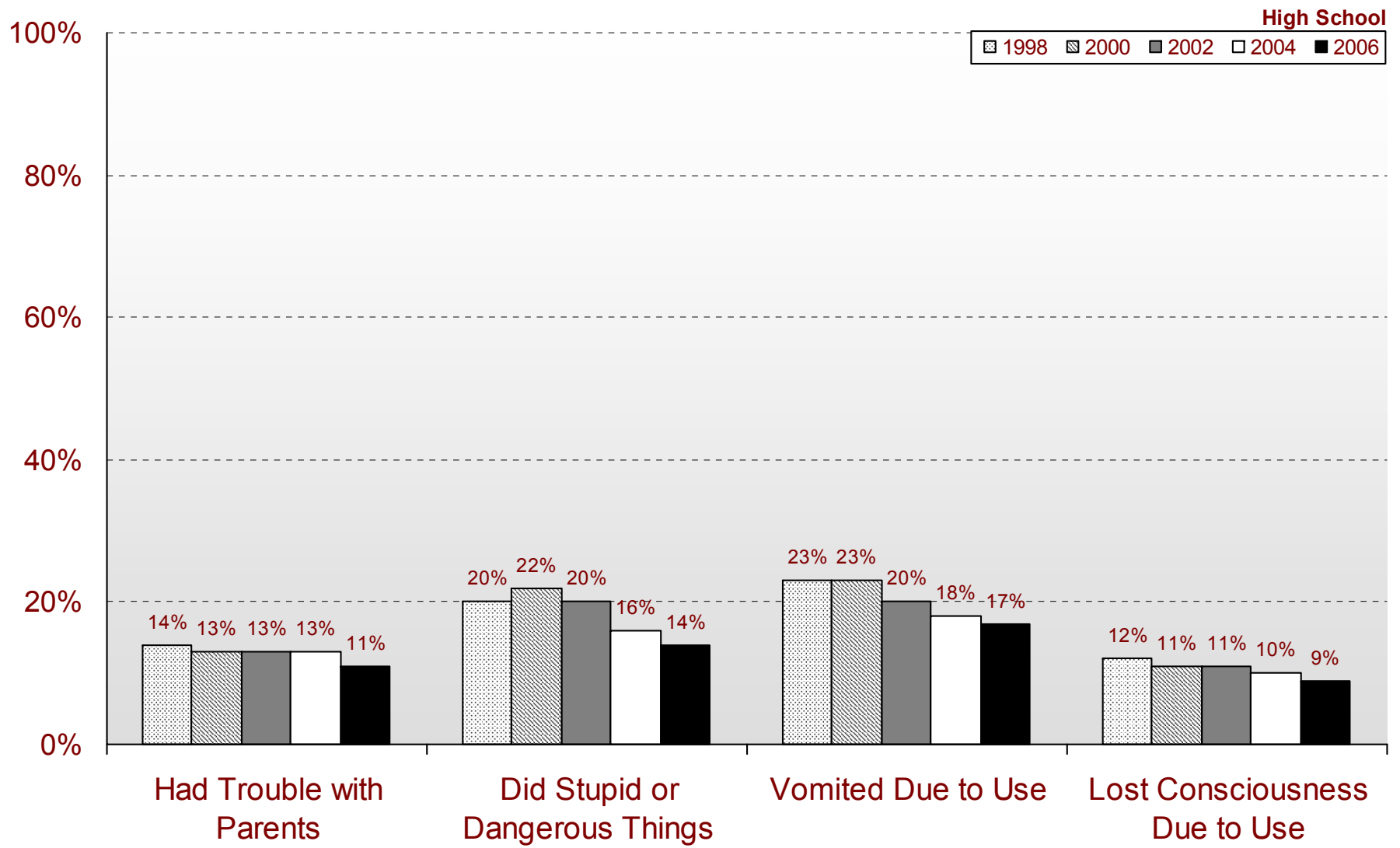
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Annual* Use of Someone Else's Prescription, Over-the-Counter Medications, or Study Drugs by Newton High School Students, Total and by Grade (2006)



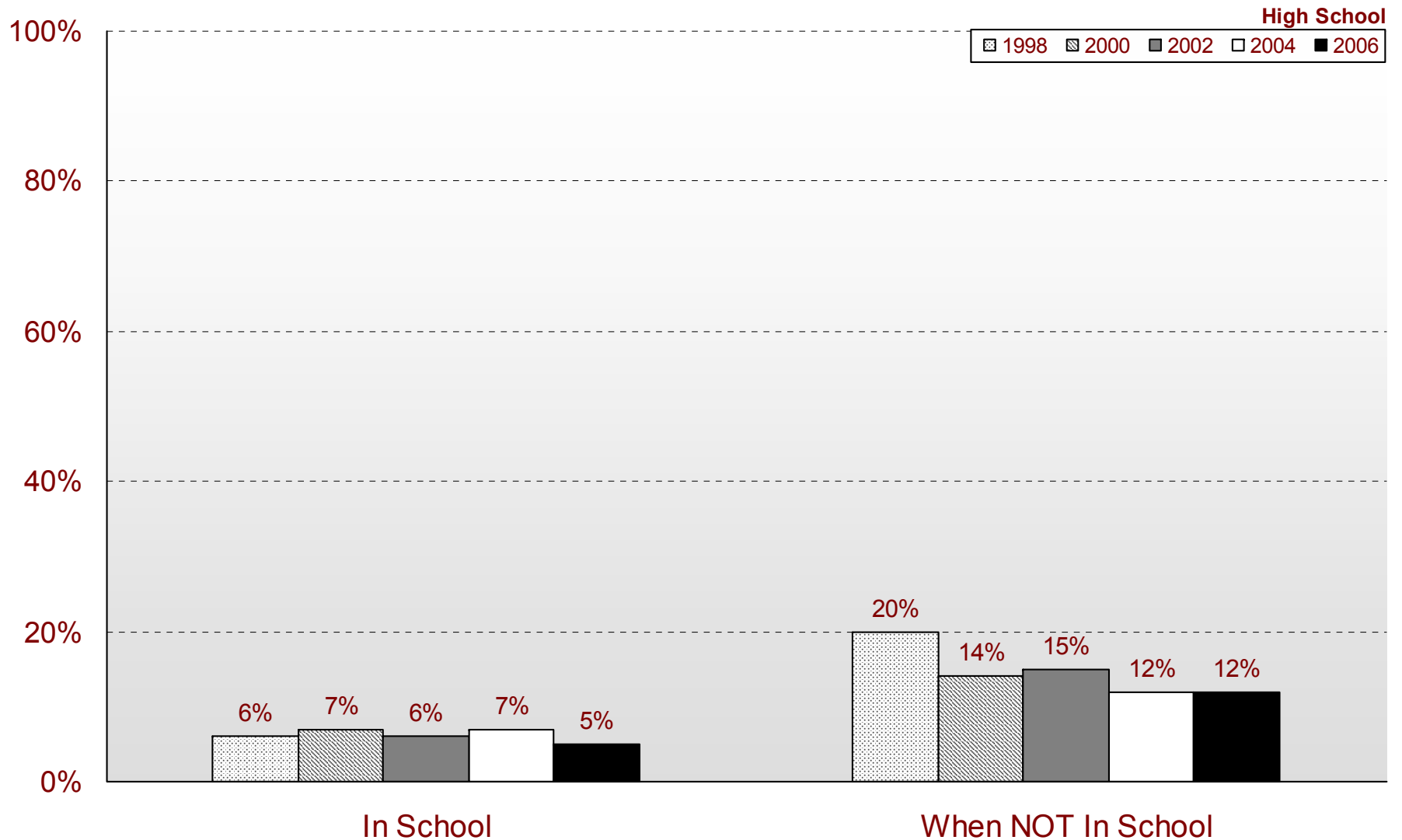
* Annual Use is any use in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Reported Problems in the Past 12 Months Related to Alcohol or Drugs ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)



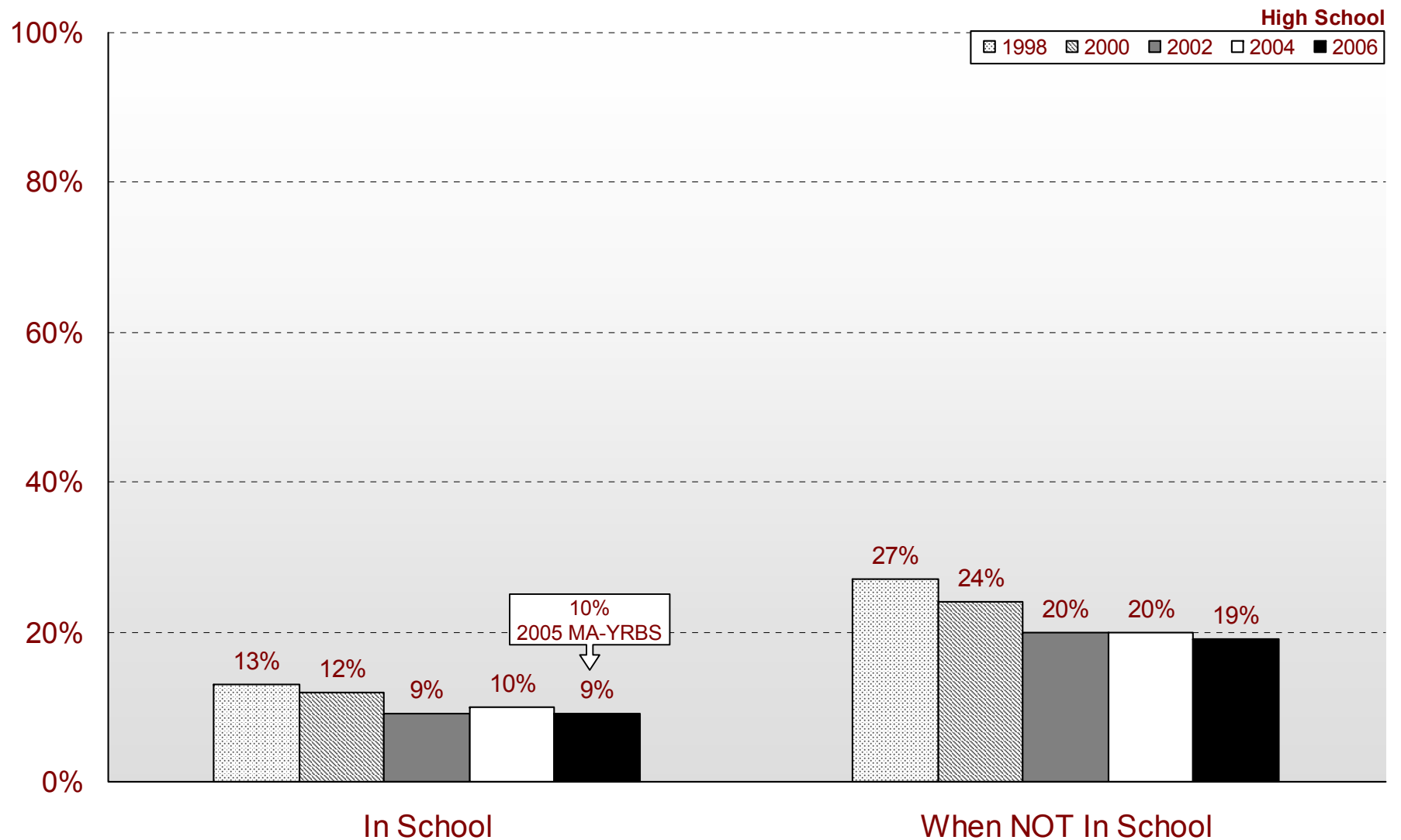
Violence and Safety

Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Worry* About Their Safety ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)

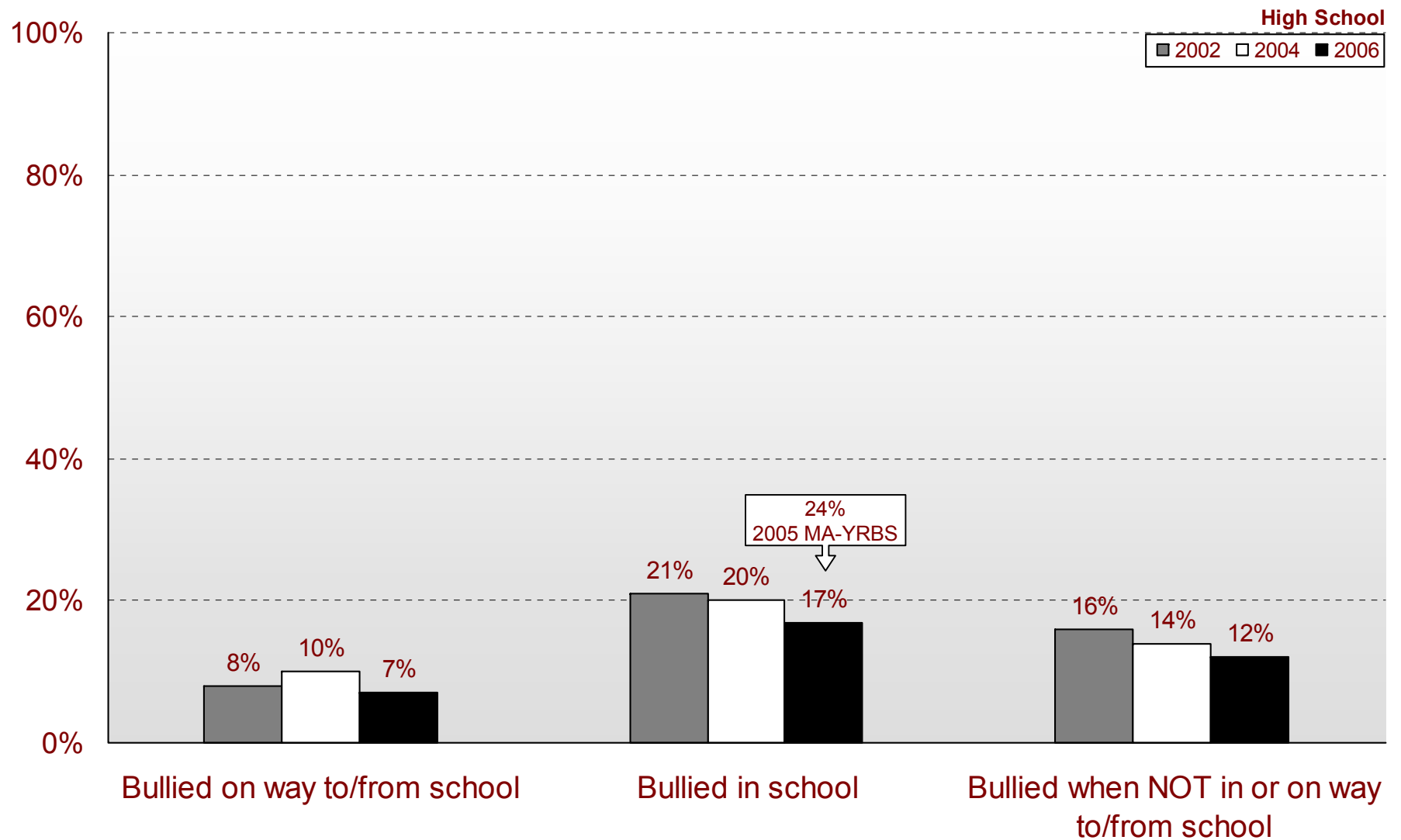


* Represents a combination of "somewhat worried" and "very worried" responses.

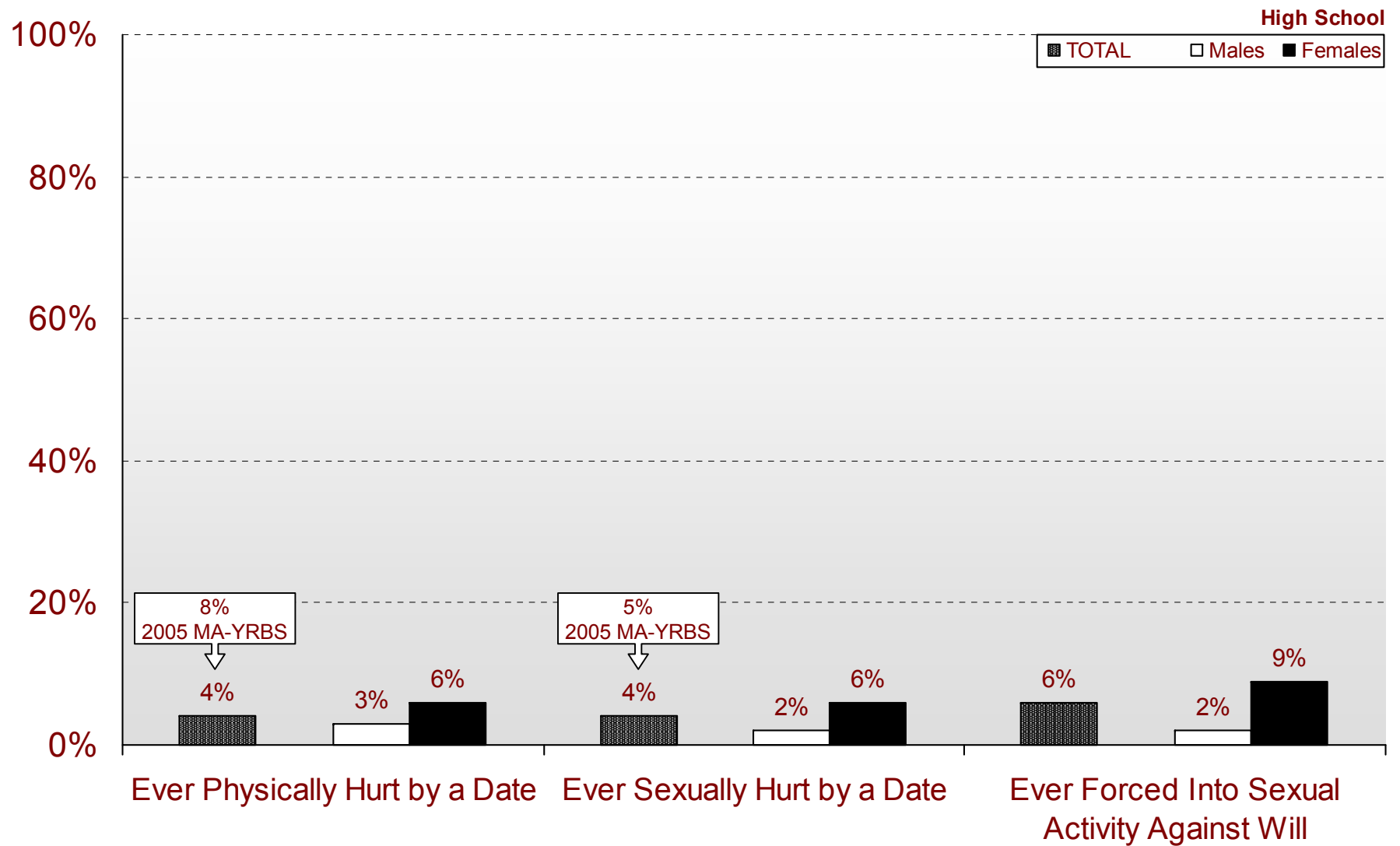
Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Were in a Physical Fight in the Past 12 Months ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)



Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Reported Being Bullied in the Past 30 Days ('02, '04, '06)

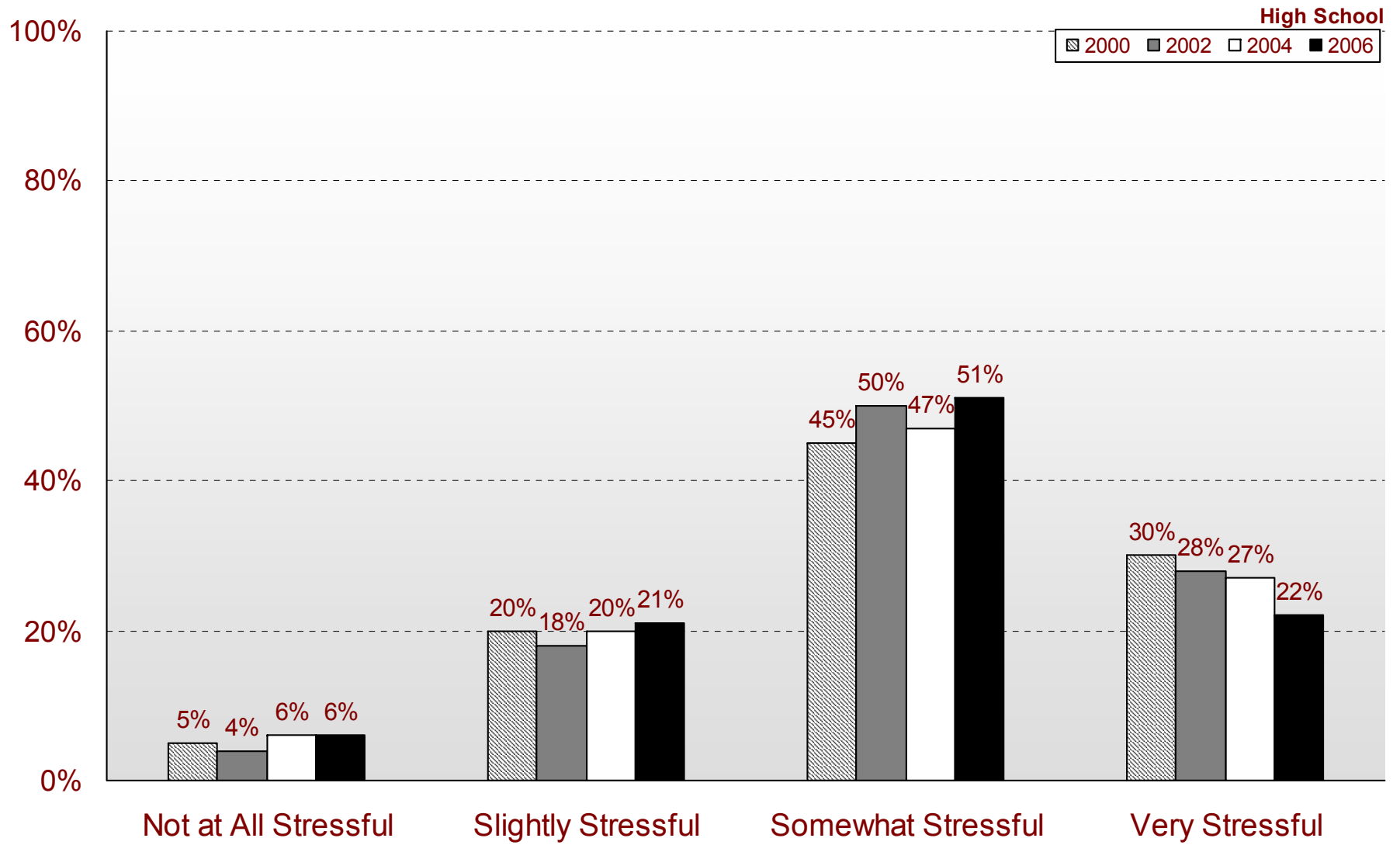


Percent of Newton High School Students Who Reported Ever Being Hurt by a Date or Forced Into Sexual Activity, Total and by Gender (2006)

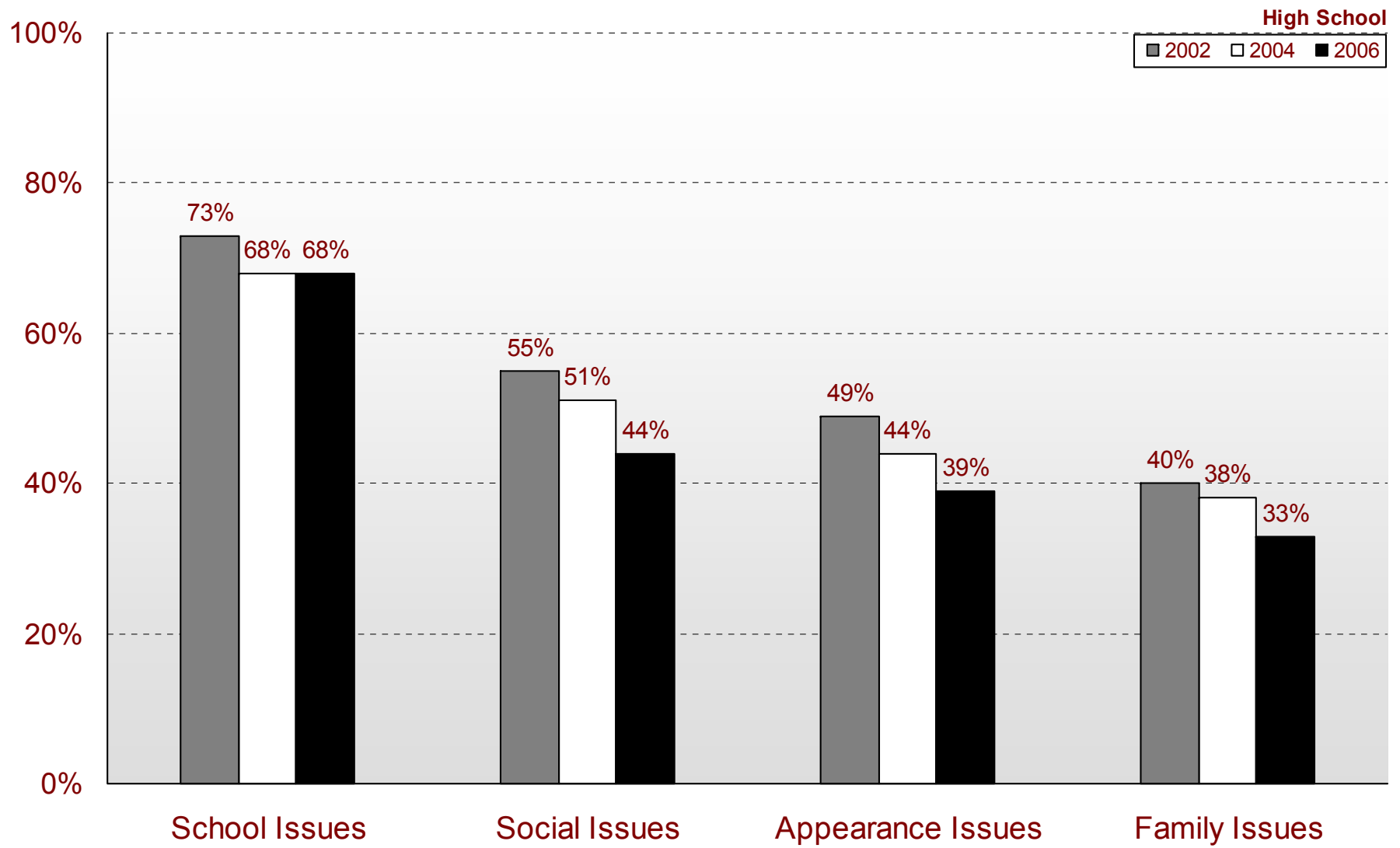


Mental Health

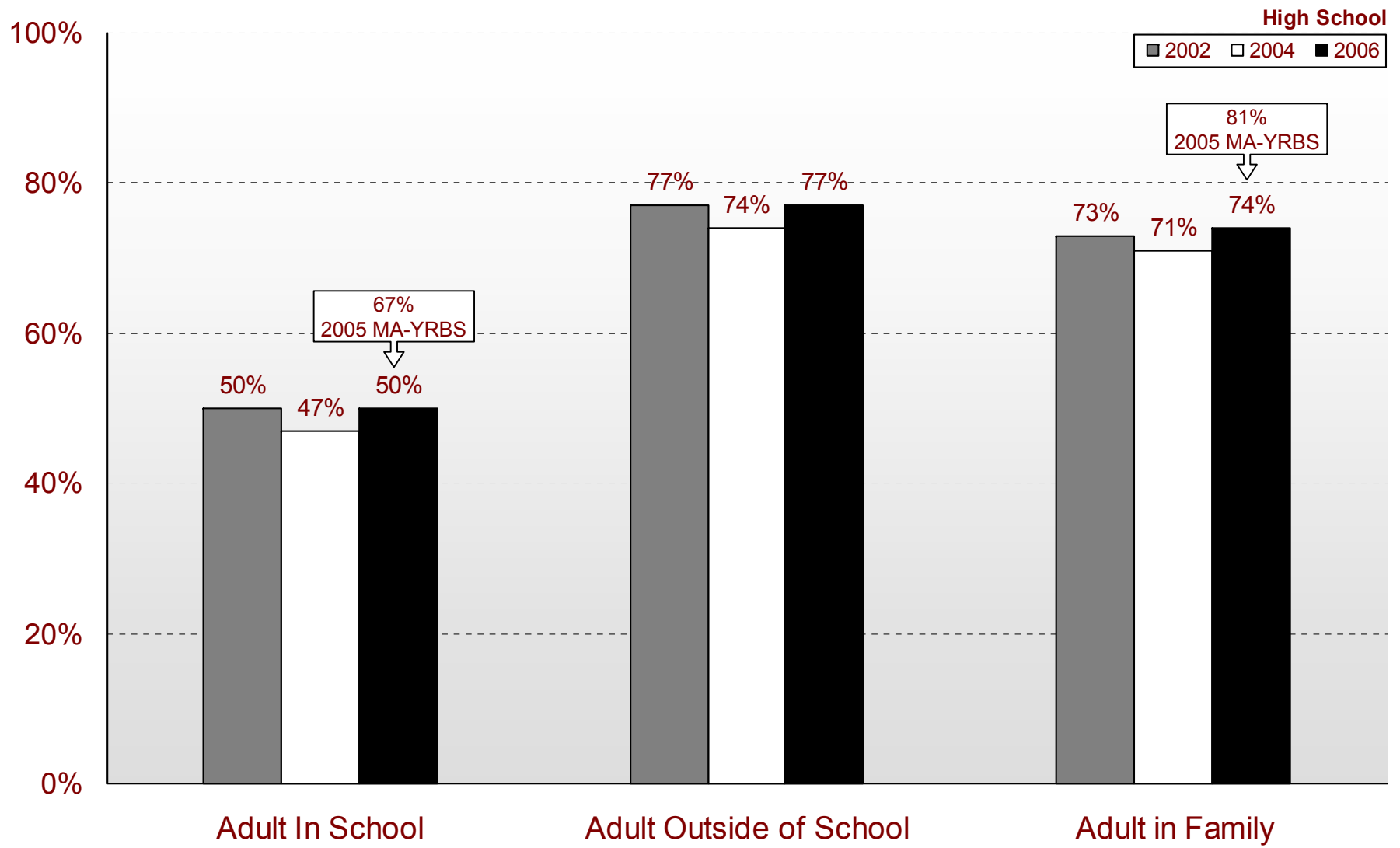
Trends in Perceived Life Stress Among Newton High School Students ('00, '02, '04, '06)



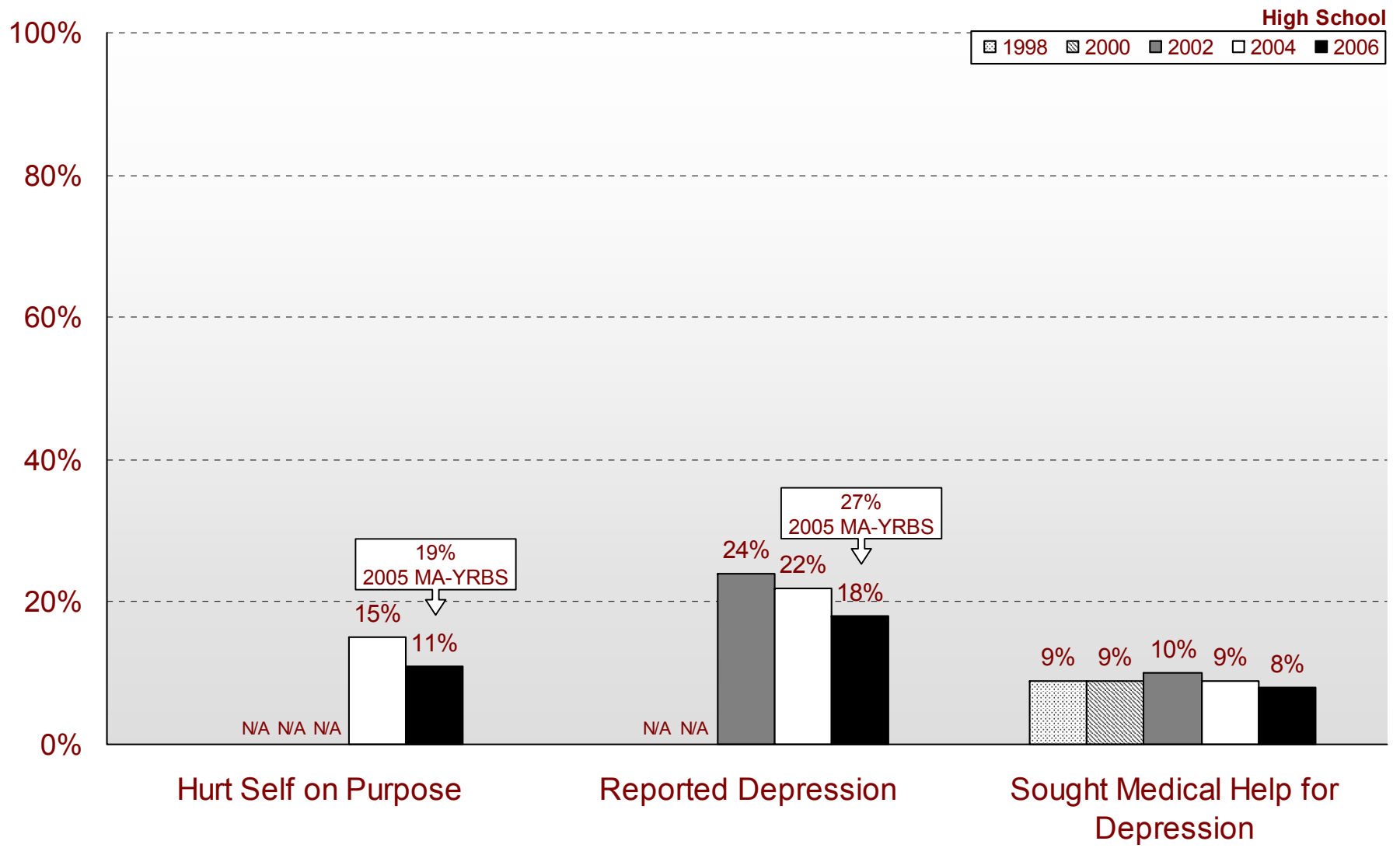
Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Worry Often or Almost Every Day About Various Issues ('02, '04, '06)



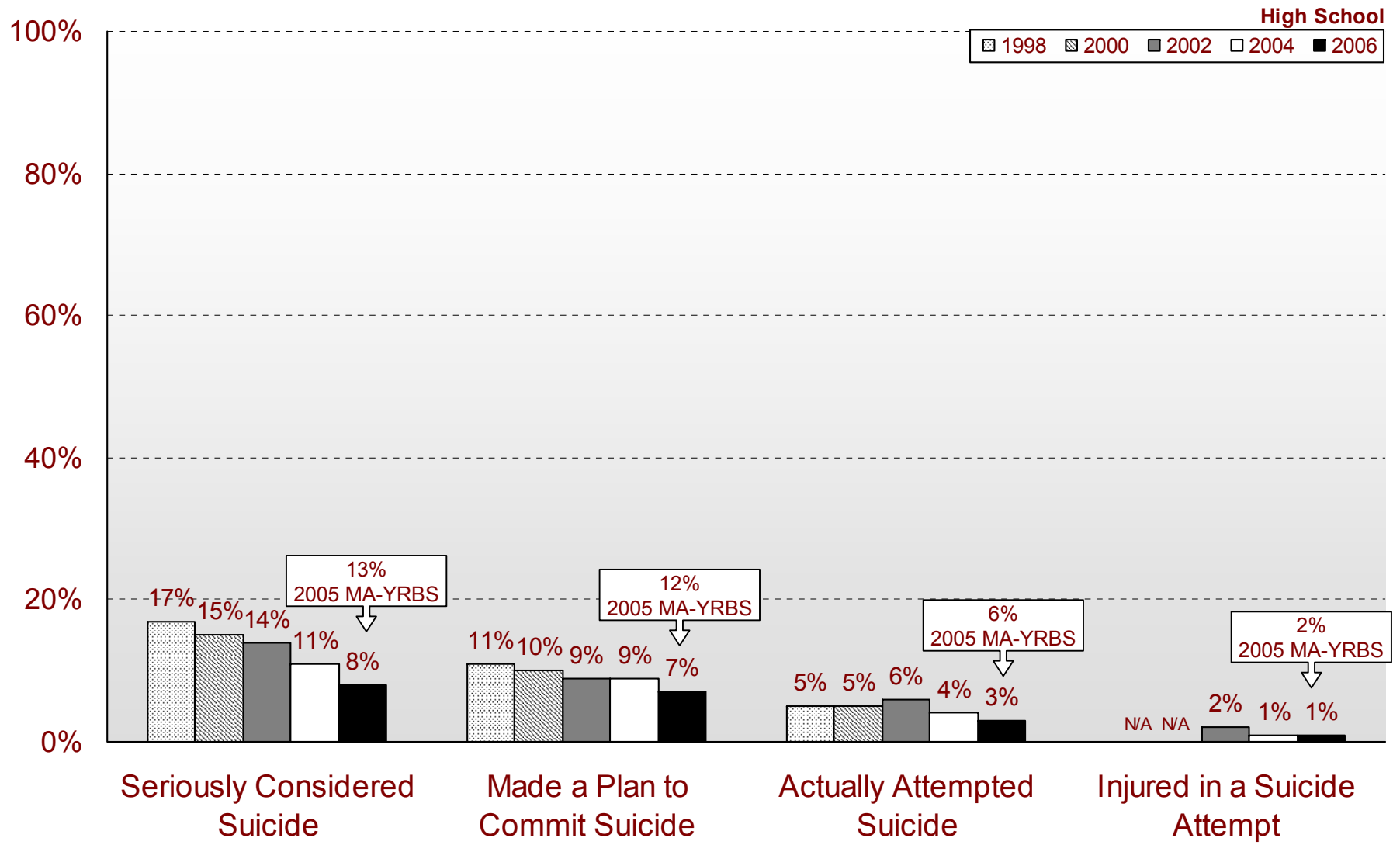
Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Report Having Adults to Talk with If They Have a Problem ('02, '04, '06)



Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Reported Hurting Themselves on Purpose, Being Depressed, and Seeking Medical Help for Depression in the Past 12 Months ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)

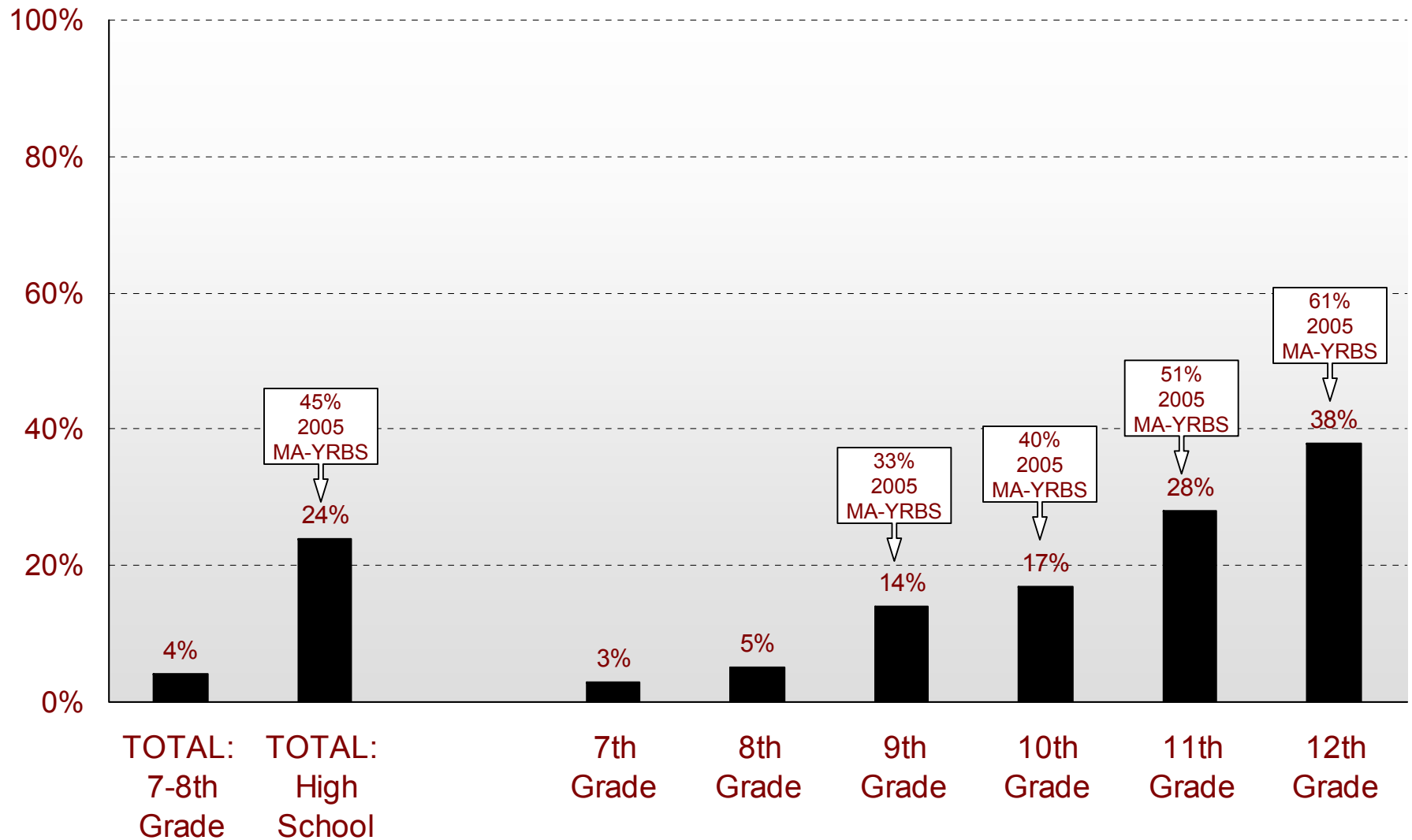


Trends in the Percent of Newton High School Students Who Reported Considering, Planning, and Attempting Suicide, & Being Injured in a Suicide Attempt in the Past 12 Months ('98, '00, '02, '04, '06)

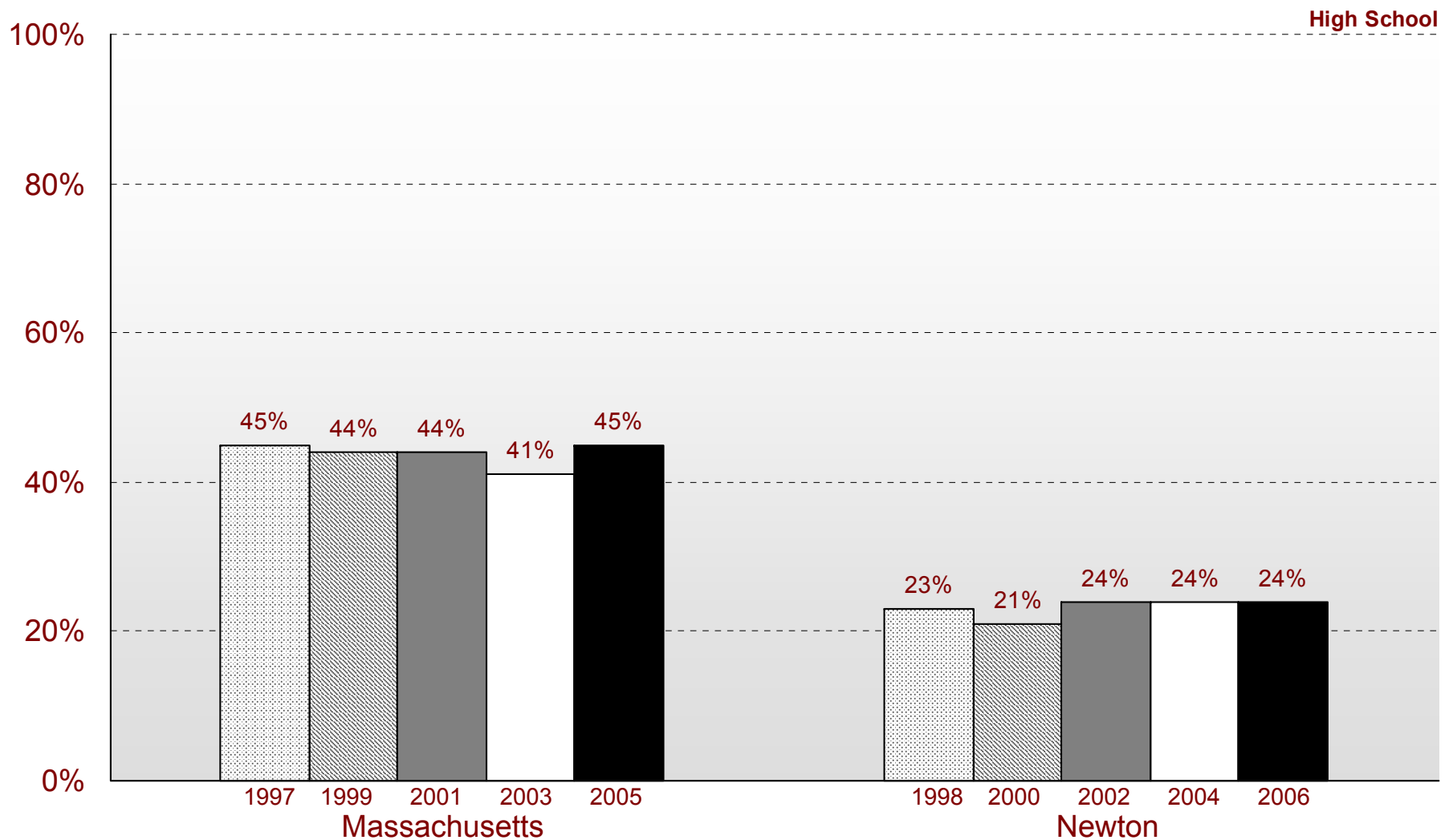


Sexual Behavior

Percent of Newton 7-8th Grade and High School Students Who Have Ever Had Sexual Intercourse, Total and by Grade (2006)



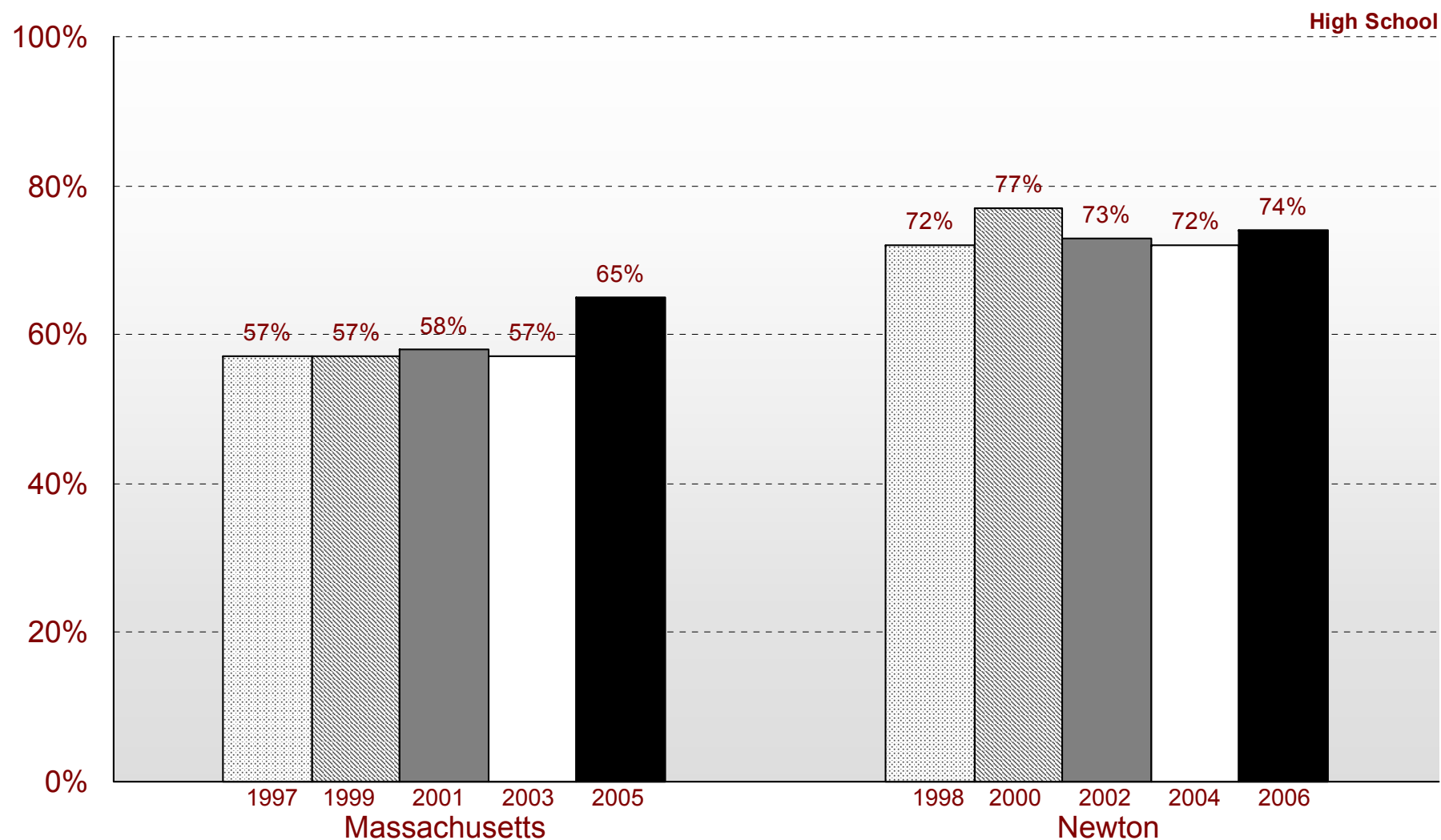
Trends in the Percent of Newton and Massachusetts* High School Students** Who Have Ever Had Sexual Intercourse



* Massachusetts high school data are from the MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the MA Department of Education in Spring of 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005.

** Trend data for Newton 7-8th grade students are as follows: 7% in 1998, 5% in 2000, 5% in 2002, 4% in 2004, and 4% in 2006.

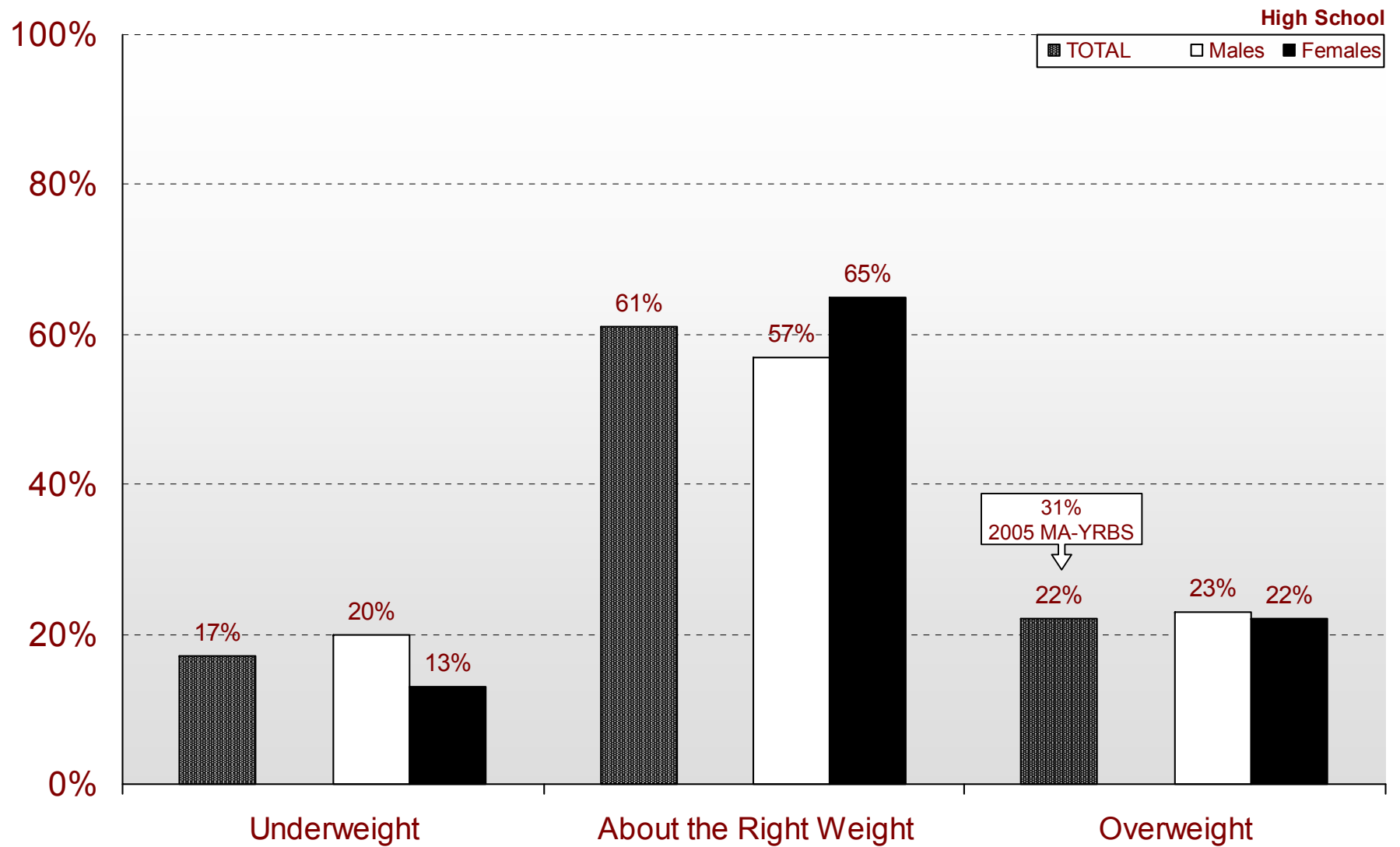
Trends in the Percent of Sexually Active Newton and Massachusetts* High School Students Who Used a Condom the Last Time They Had Sexual Intercourse



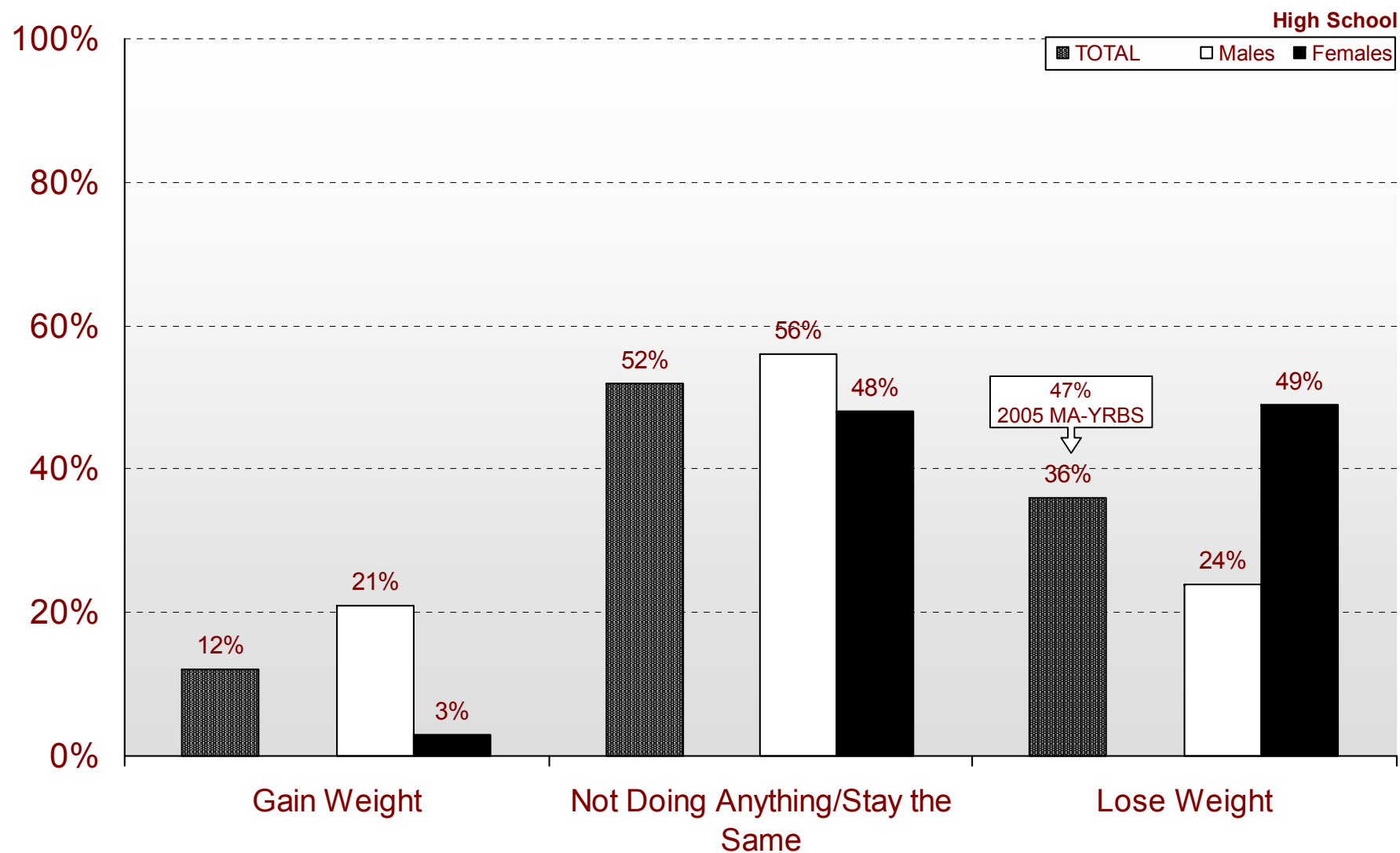
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Weight Perception and Control

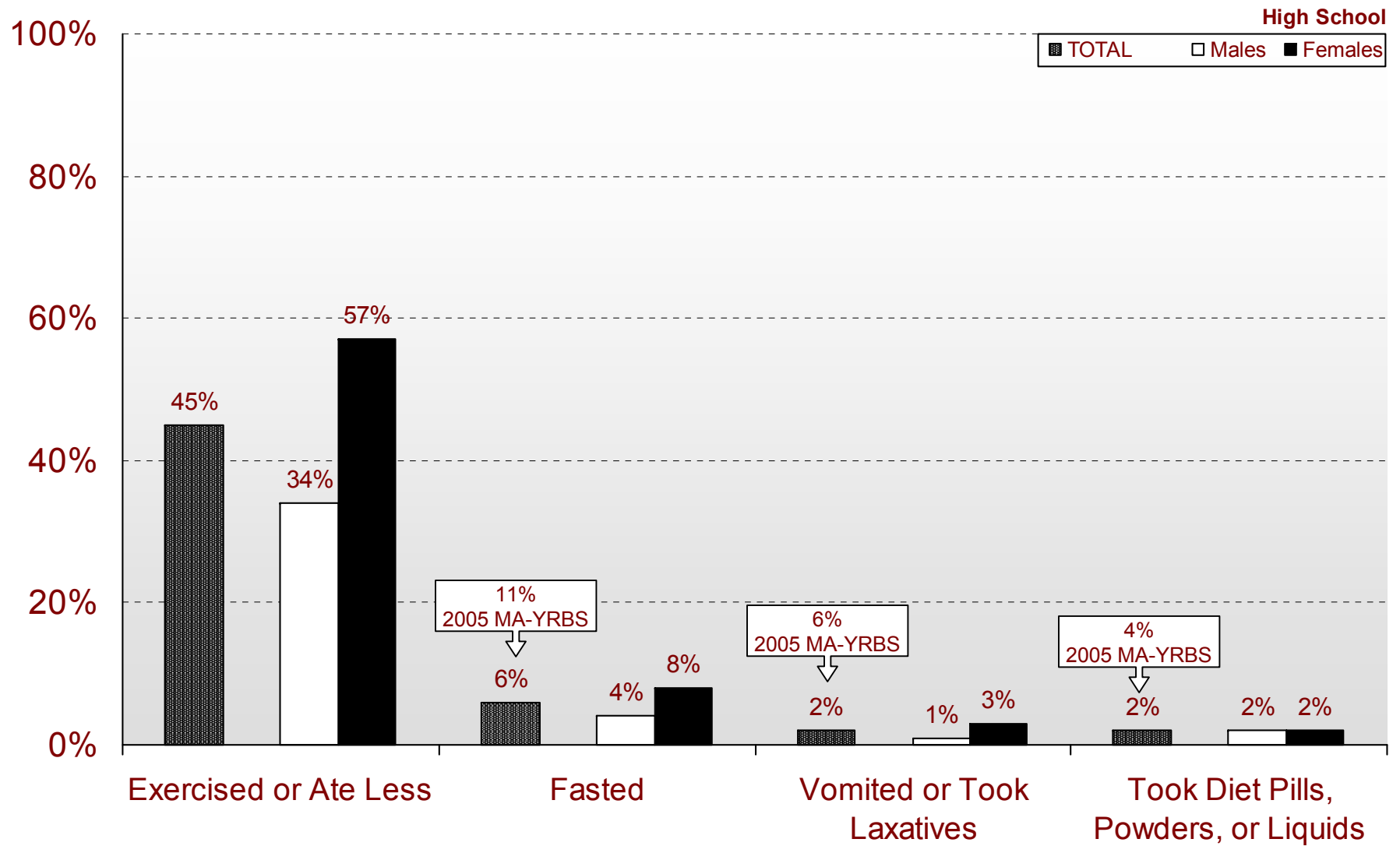
Perception of Body Weight by Newton High School Students, Total and by Gender (2006)



Percent of Newton High School Students Reporting Attempts to Change Their Weight, Total and by Gender (2006)



Percent of Newton High School Students Who Used Various Methods* to Lose or Maintain Their Weight, Total and by Gender (2006)



* Respondents could check all that apply.